

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed August 14, 2003 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Before entry of the present amendment, Claims 1-33 were pending, with Claims 1 and 15 being in independent form. In the present amendment, independent Claims 1 and 15 have been cancelled without prejudice, as well as dependent Claims 12-14 and 18-33 as redundant under U.S. patent practice. Independent Claims 34 and 39 have been added and contain no new matter. Newly-added independent Claims 34 and 39 have support at least in the entirety of the originally filed specification, including, but limited to, line 27 of page 2 to line 6 of page 3, line 9 of page 5 to line 28 of page 6 (for Claim 34), line 29 of page 6 to line 22 of page 8 (for both claims), line 26 of page 9 to line 36 of page 10 (for Claim 39), as well as the originally filed claims and drawings. Dependent Claims 2-11 and 16-17 have been amended in order to appropriately refer to newly-added independent Claim 34. Dependent Claims 35-38 and 40 have been added, and the specification has been amended to include the priority claim (already acknowledged by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office). After entry of the present amendment, Claims 2-11, 16-17, and 34-40 will be pending, with Claims 34 and 39 being in independent form. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections in the August 14, 2003 Office Action are requested on the basis of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

In ¶1 of the Office Action, Claims 1-33 were rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as indefinite because of the term "two-dimensional" in many of the claims and the term "such as" in Claim 4. First, the term "two-dimensional" has been cancelled without prejudice from the claims. Second, applicants respectfully point out that the phrase "such as" in Claim 4 was replaced with the term "including" in the Preliminary Amendment dated December 28, 2001. Nonetheless, the term "including" and the examples which are referred to have been moved to newly-added dependent Claims 37-38 (which can thereby not contain new matter). Applicants intend this separation to clarify any indefiniteness regarding the scope of Claim 4: it is intended to include any possible synthetic and/or natural fiber ever used by man, and, in fact, also includes any future synthetic and/or natural fiber which may be created or used. Withdrawal of the §112, second paragraph, rejection is respectfully requested.

In ¶3 of the Office Action, independent Claims 1 and 15, as well as Claims 2, 4, 5, 6-10, 16-18, 20-24 and 33 depending therefrom, were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as obvious over Japanese App. Ser. No. 2000-176964 (hereinafter referred to as "the '964 application") in view of the schematic web page entitled "What is injection molding?" (hereinafter referred to as "the schematic web page"). Claims 1, 15, 18, 20-24, and 33 have been cancelled without prejudice in the present Amendment, and their rejection is thus moot. Claims 2, 4, 5, and 6-10 have been amended to depend, either directly or indirectly, from newly-added independent Claim 34.

Newly-added independent Claim 34 is patentable over the combination of the '964 application and the schematic web page because the aforesaid combination neither teaches nor suggests " a reinforcing core material having a curved shape " and "a first resin surface layer covering a first of the at least two surfaces of said core material; a second resin surface layer covering a second of the at least two surfaces of said core material on a side opposite to said first surface, said second resin surface layer being integrated with said first resin surface layer on at least a part of said second resin surface layer; and a resin-made structural member formed integrally with at least one of said first and second resin surface layers and protruding from said at least one of said first and second resin surface layers," as is recited in Claim 34.

Furthermore, there is no motivation or suggestion to combine the '964 application and the schematic web page in order to create the claimed invention (even though, as explained above, the combination does not suggest the claimed invention). The '964 application is directed to a "decorative wall laminated sheet, the switch panel of a motor vehicle, a furniture [*sic*] and a building [*sic*] or stationary" (see 'USE' section in BASIC ABSTRACT). There is no reason, suggestion, or motivation to combine the teachings of the '964 application with the teachings of the schematic web page to problem of the creating a casing for a portable electronic device. It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has engaged in impermissible hindsight in piecing together two such dissimilar pieces of prior art in order to teach the claimed invention (which the invalid combination does not).

Further still, the claimed invention of the present application is directed to making the thickness of all or part of the casing of a portable device thinner, while maintaining the structural integrity of the casing. Unlike the objects shown in the cited prior art references, portable

electronic devices tend to have more complex shapes with curves and necessarily protruding structures for various components, such as screw bosses, stoppers, or ribs (as an example, consider structural protrusion 19 in FIG. 2(e) of the present application). It is difficult to both maintain the structural strength of such protrusions (and the casing as a whole) and keep the casing as thin as is required for modern portable electronic devices. The claimed invention is directed to solving this problem with an inventive structure and method neither suggested nor taught by the combination of the '964 application and the schematic web page.

For at least for any one of the above reasons, newly-added independent Claim 34 is patentable over the combination of the '964 application and the schematic web page. Its allowance is respectfully requested. At least through their dependence on independent Claim 34, dependent Claims 2, 4, 5, and 6-10 are also believed to be patentable over the combination of the '964 application and the schematic web page, and are thereby in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested.

In ¶4 of the Office Action, dependent Claims 3, 11-14, 19, and 25-33 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as obvious over various combinations of the '964 application, the schematic web page, *Bompard*, and further in view of Japanese Pat. Ser. No. 5050433. Claims 12-14, 19, and 25-33 have been cancelled without prejudice and their rejection is thus moot. Claim 3 depends from independent Claim 34, which is believed to be in condition for allowance, and is therefore also believed to be in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of its rejection is respectfully requested.

In the present Amendment, Claims 34-40 have been added. The fact that newly-added independent Claims 34 and 39, as well as newly-added dependent Claims 37 and 38, contain no new matter has been discussed above. The various reasons why independent Claim 34 is patentable over the cited prior art were discussed above. Independent Claim 39 recites a method for producing a casing such as the one recited in Claim 34, and, for somewhat the same reasons, is also allowable over the cited prior art. Both Claims 37 and 38 are in condition for allowance through their dependence on independent Claim 34, which is in condition for allowance.

Newly-added dependent Claim 35 recites material supported at least by the text at lines 23-32 on page 7 of the specification, newly-added dependent Claim 36 recites material supported

at least by the text from line 33 on page 7 to line 22 on page 8 of the specification, and both Claims 35 and 36 are in condition for allowance through their dependence on independent Claim 34, which is in condition for allowance. Newly-added dependent Claim 40 recites material supported at least by the text from line 22 on page 14 to line 25 on page 16 of the specification, and is in condition for allowance through its dependence on independent Claim 39, which is in condition for allowance.

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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